(d) No, Madam. For the present, the is no proposal under consideration of the Government to open up wheat export from the Central Pool.

Need to help sugar cane farmers

134. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether country's sugarcane belt is yet to reap the benefits as the indifference of the Central and the State Governments has only increased plight of cane farmers in the last five years with no support from Government sector to cane farmers or turning to other agriculture items like wheat and pulses and seasonal vegetables due to less remuneration awarded by mill owners;

(b) if so, whether sharp fall in sugar production has already stoked up prices in the retail market to Rs. 25-28 per kg.; and

(c) the concrete measures and steps Government considers to take to improve its output?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (c) No, Sir. To increase the production and productivity of sugarcane, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Sustainable Development of Sugarcane Based Cropping System (SUBACS) under Macro Management of Agriculture is implemented in 23 States/Union Territories. The scheme provides assistance to the farmer for extension and developmental activities to increase production and productivity of the sugarcane.

Besides, the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution is providing soft loans to sugar mills from Sugar Development Fund (SDF) for cane development in mill areas for production of planting materials, irrigation purposes, incentive to farmers for switching over to improved varieties, ratoon management, tissue culture laboratories etc.

Apart from the above Central Govt. has been fixing the SMP of sugarcane for each sugar season, having regard to the various factors *viz*., cost of production of sugarcane; return to the growers from alternative crops and the general trend of prices of agriculture commodities; availability of sugar to consumers at a fair price; price at which sugar produced from sugarcane is sold by sugar producers; and recovery of sugar from sugarcane realization made from sale of by-products *viz.* molasses, bagasse and presumed or their imputed value.

In view of increase in Minimum Support Price (MSP) of wheat and paddy in the recent past, shift in area from sugarcane, ensuring profitability of sugarcane cultivation *vis-a-vis* wheat and paddy and to ensure adequate production of sugarcane and sugar, the Government has recently approved fixation of SMP of sugarcane for 2009-10 sugar season at Rs. 107.76 per quintal linked to a basic recovery rate of 9.5%, subject to premium of Rs. 1.13 for every 0.1 percentage point

increase in recovery about that level. This is significantly higher than the SMP for the previous sugar season which was Rs. 81.18 per quintal linked to a basic recovery of 9 percent subject to a premium of 0.90 for every 0.1 percent increase in the recovery above that level for the sugar season 2008-09. Sugar production is decreased in (2008-09) compared to previous years mainly because of adverse climatic conditions, decrease in sugarcane area, reduction in productivity, delay and intermittent cane price payment, higher diversion of cane towards the Gur, Jaggary and Khandsari units and better return from the competitive crops resulted decrease in sugar production and consequently increase in sugar price. The above mentioned measures are meant for increasing production of sugarcane and sugar in the coming years.

Kuttanad Package proposal of Government of Kerala

135. SHRI P. RAJEEVE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has approved the Kuttanad Package proposed by Government of Kerala as a whole;

(b) if so, to what extent the Central assistance can be received by the State under the package;

(c) what are the conditions for acceptance of project proposals made by Government of Kerala;

(d) the position with regard to the project proposals made by the State;

(e) what are the reasons for rejection of the proposals, if any; and

(f) whether the guidelines under the Central Schemes are in conformity with the recommendations of M.S. Swaminathan foundation report on Kuttanad?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) and (b) For development of Kuttanad Wetland Eco-system as a part of Rehabilitation Package for the farmers in suicide-prone districts of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra, the Government has granted 'in-principle' approval for providing financial support involving financial outlay of Rs. 1,840.75 crore for implementing various programmes/ interventions suggested by M.S Swaminathan Research Foundation. The Government has also approved that the programmes/interventions involving financial outlay upto Rs.50 lakhs will be implemented by the State Government of Kerala from their own funds under their schemes.

(c) The approved programmes/interventions are to be implemented by the concerned Ministries/Departments within their existing schemes and funding pattern for which the Government of Kerala will, after identifying the activities to be undertaken, submit appropriate proposals after formulation of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) to the concerned Ministries/Departments of the Government of India in accordance with the approved guidelines/procedures for such schemes for release of necessary funds.